(b) Separate statistics for export of Tulsi is not provided by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Kolkata. However, according to the data received by APEDA from certification agencies, in the year 2007-08 around 172.75 tonnes of Tulsi valued at US $ 26431 was exported by Organic India Private Ltd, Lucknow.

(c) Under National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) efforts are being made to promote organic farming in the country and to educate farmers in betterment of crop management for improvement in production of different crops. Dissemination of information and technology transfer to farmers is carried out through Farmers' training on Organic Farming. Training programmes on quality control of organic inputs, certification and inspection are also provided. Besides, field demonstrations with the use of organic inputs like vermicompost, bio-fertilizers and enriched biogas slurry are also organized. Service Provider Scheme is one of the important component of NPOP under which group certification is being promoted to encourage organic farming including that of Tulsi among small and marginal farmers.

(d) As per information received from APEDA, United Kingdom and Germany are the major importers of Tulsi. APEDA implements schemes like Market Development, Infrastructure Development and Quality Development to promote export of agriculture products including organic products.

Shortage of Copra

555. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute shortage of copra in this season;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to protect the interests of copra farmers especially in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) There is no acute shortage of copra in this season.

(c) The steps being taken by the Government to protect the interests of copra farmers including Andhra Pradesh are as under:

(i) Declared the minimum support price of edible copra, milling copra and even for dehusked coconut to safeguard the farmers' interest during periods of high production and crash in price.

(ii) Financial support is being given through Coconut Development Board under Technology Mission Programme for processing and value addition of coconut by introducing copra dryer and other equipments.

(iii) A sum of Rs.8.5 crore has been given for management of Eriophyid mite infested coconut garden in Andhra Pradesh.

Financial crises in NAFED

556 SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that NAFED had been reeling under tremendous financial crisis for the last two years and if so, what are the specific reasons for such crisis;

(b) whether Government had received any request from NAFED to tide over their financial difficulties and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The reasons for financial crisis of NAFED include non-recovery of dues under Public Private Partnership (PPP)/tie-up business, higher debt burden, higher interest liability and financial losses.

(b) NAFED has submitted a proposal to this Ministry for providing an interest free loan of Rs.2000 crore to tide over their financial difficulties arose due to tie-up business.

(c) NAFED is a national level Cooperative Marketing Federation, registered under Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002. NAFED has undertaken PPP/tie-up business on its own under its commercial activities, without any Government support. Presently, there is no budgetary provision to provide interest free loan to NAFED. However, as NAFED is the Central agency for procurement of oilseeds, pulses and cotton under Price Support Scheme (PSS), Government is providing Government guarantee for arranging working capital and reimbursing the losses to NAFED, if any, on account of undertaking Price Support operations.

Sowing of agricultural crops

†557.SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that agricultural crops have been sown on larger agricultural land of the country on 1st January, 2009 in comparison to 1st January, 2008;

(b) if so, the area of land on which wheat, pulses, oilseeds and paddy crops have been sown in both the said periods;

(c) whether there were such agricultural land available in the country on 1st January, 2009 and 1st January 2008, respectively, where sowing could not take place due to some reasons; and

(d) if so, the area of such land available during both the above said years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTIAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The area sown under agricultural crops in the country in the month of January pertains to crops sown during the Rabi season. The assessment of area coverage under various crops is done in the Ministry of Agriculture on weekly basis by Crop Weather Watch Group (CWWG). As per assessment in the meetings of CWWG, total area coverage under Rabi crops at all India level as on 2nd January 2009 was larger at 550.09 lakh hectares as compared to 525.79 lakh hectares in the corresponding period of 2008. The details of Rabi areas covered under wheat, rice/paddy, pulses and oilseeds as on 2nd January, 2009 *vis-a-vis* the corresponding period of 2008 are given in the table below:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.